

Open source 'tree of life' shows evolution of every species ever

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

Scientists have released the first draft of a digital “[tree of life](#)” that visualizes everything we know about the planet’s roughly 2.3 million named species and how they are related to one another.

The project, a collaborative effort among scientists from 11 organizations, traces relationships between living things as far back as the dawn of life on Earth 3.5 billion years ago. The result is an online resource that encompasses tens of thousands of smaller evolutionary trees published over the years in a format that anyone can use or edit – an effort that illustrates on a broad scale how open-science principles and digital technology can bring together information to expand understanding of a complex subject.

“Twenty-five years ago people said this goal of huge trees was impossible,” [said co-author Douglas Soltis](#), a genetics professor at the University of Florida. “The open tree of life is an important starting point that other investigators can now refine and improve for decades to come.”

Open science advocates promote “the free, immediate, availability on the public Internet of those works which scholars give to the world without expectation of payment,” [according to the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition](#), an international alliance of academic and research libraries. Through open science, users can “read, download, copy, distribute, print, search or link to the full text of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software or use them for any other lawful purpose.”

Read full, original post: [How digital 'tree of life' embodies the potential of open science](#)